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O.J. Witness Says Shoe Photo

By Stephanie Simon
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Santa Monica

An amateur photo analyst who said he learned about fake images in the advertising business testified yesterday that a snapshot showing O.J. Simpson wearing Bruno Magli shoes is most likely a fraud.

"My conclusion," Robert Groden told jurors, "is that there is a high likelihood of forgery."

The defense has not disputed that the shoes in the photos are

Bruno Maglis — the same Italian brand that tracked size-12 bloody footprints away from the bodies of Nicole Brown Simpson and Ronald Goldman. Simpson, however, has sworn that he would never have purchased such shoes, which he characterized as ugly. The photo, he declared in his testimony last month, must be a phony.

To discredit the photo, which surfaced months after Simpson was acquitted of criminal charges, the defense called Groden to the witness stand. Groden pointed out

at least 10 anomalies in the photo's negative that he said indicated possible tampering.

The negative was positioned off-center on the contact sheet, he said, and it was slightly longer than other negatives from the same roll of film. He also said he observed two suspicious squiggles, suggesting someone had retouched the gray pants Simpson is wearing in the photo. And he determined that the tinting in the photo seemed off-kilter, with hues that did not match the other negatives

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Has Holes

in the roll.

To illustrate his point, Groden passed glossy prints of the photo to jurors, who studied them intently. However, Groden acknowledged that a few of his observations were "very, very difficult to see."

Plaintiffs' attorney Peter Gel-

blum will cross-examine Groden tomorrow. In addition, the plaintiffs have lined up their own expert witness — the retired chief of the FBI's photo analysis division — to vouch for the snapshot, which an Associated Press free-lancer claims to have taken at a football game about eight months before the murders.

In a hearing outside the jury's presence yesterday, Gelblum hinted at the tone of his cross-examina-

tion when he ridiculed Groden as having "feeble qualifications."

Groden now makes his living publishing books and videos on the assassination of President John Kennedy. But he claims expertise in faked photos as well.

His qualifications, he testified, include working two decades ago as an optical technician for a film company, a job that involved inserting titles into movie frames and creating other special effects.